

Menmonite Church
Germantown Avenue above Herman Street
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-15

HABS

PA

51 GERM

51-

no GERM (copy)

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

THE MENNONITE CHURCH
Germantown Avenue above Herman Street
Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania

Owners - Board of Trustees of the Germantown Mennonite Church, Rev. H.T. Landes, Pastor, 6813 Clearview Street, Philadelphia.

Date of Erection - 1770

Present Condition - In good state of preservation, rear wing added 1907

Number of Stories - One

Materials of Construction - Foundations, stone; floors, wood; exterior walls, stone; interior walls, stone and frame; roof, wood shingles.

Additional Data - In 1677 William Penn travelled extensively in Holland and Germany and organized a Yearly Meeting for Friends in various cities of both countries. He offered as Proprietor of Pennsylvania to give shelter and protection to all who suffered for conscience sake, an offer that was gladly accepted both by Germans and Hollanders. As a result Francis Daniel Pastorius of Frankfort, Germany, organized a company for taking up land and forming the settlement of Germantown. He thus discusses the religious beliefs of his party that arrived in Philadelphia August 20, 1683: "Among my servants I have such as hold to the Roman, to the Lutheran, to the Calvinistic, to the Anabaptist and to the Anglican Church, but only one Quaker." In Germany Pastorius had belonged to the Pietistic wing of the Lutheran Church. In Pennsylvania he joined the Society of Friends.

Writing of the first place of worship in Germantown in 1686, Pastorius called it, not a meeting house, but a "kirchlein" - a little Church. Eventually, however, the Germantown Congregation was formally attached to the Society of Friends. Some of the original settlers had been Mennonites in Europe, but all but one of the thirteen "heads of families" from Crefeld arriving on October 6, 1683, became members of the Society of Friends, the sole exception remained a Mennonite. With the arrival of other Mennonites however, a congregation of that faith came into existence about 1690. Denominational differences were then becoming evident in Germantown. Of the forty-four families, twenty-eight were Quakers, among the other sixteen families several faiths were represented, but they were all opposed to Quakerism and therefore had a service of their own every Sunday. While the Mennonites and the Society of Friends were akin in their avoidance of display and their refusal to engage in war or to subscribe to oaths, they differed definitely in theology, for the Mennonites required baptism of

adults and observed the holy supper, or communion, which rites were not acceptable to the Society of Friends. In those days the Mennonites were generally known as Anabaptists or Baptists.

The Mennonites built a log church in 1708 at Germantown Avenue and Herman Street, this being the first American church of the denomination. This building was replaced in 1770 by the church that is still in use. In the church is preserved the table on which was written a public protest against slavery, issued in the year 1688. It is from the pen of Pastorius and is signed by him and three others. It was presented at one of the meetings of the Society of Friends in Germantown, and was forwarded to and "weightily considered" in the Yearly Meeting, held in Burlington, New Jersey. The table was brought over from Crefeld, Germany.

References: Pamphlet issued on the occasion of the two hundred and fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of Germantown, October 1933, written by Edward R. Hocker. See also "Guide to Historic Germantown" by Charles F. Jenkins, 1904.

E. Perot Beasly

District Officer.

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

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Addendum to
Mennonite Meeting House
6119 Germantown Road
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240